

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An aligning drive mechanism, ~~wherein~~ comprising:
a guide hole (10) as a reference surface for aligning is formed in a housing (6),
an output member (13) is inserted into the guide hole (10) axially movably,
the output member (13) is provided with a plurality of guided portions (21, 22) axially at intervals,

an annular aligning space (31, 32), which narrows in either one axial direction, is formed between at least one of the guided portions (21, 22) and the guide hole (10),

a shuttle member (41, 42), which is diametrically expandable and contractible, is inserted into the aligning space (31, 32), the shuttle member (41, 42) is supported on either one of the guide hole (10) or the guided portion (21, 22) axially movably, and ~~adapted~~ configured to make a tapering engagement with the other of the guided portion or the guide hole (21, 22 or 10),

the shuttle member (41, 42) is urged by an urging means (51, 52) in such a direction as to tighten the tapering engagement,

the output member (13) is ~~adapted~~ configured to be axially reciprocable by a driving means (D).

2. (Original) The aligning drive mechanism as set forth in claim 1, wherein
the guide hole (10) is composed of a first guide hole (11) and a second guide hole (12), the diameter of which is larger than that of the first guide hole (11),

a plurality of the guided portions are composed of a first guided portion (21) corresponding to the first guide hole (11) and a second guided portion (22) corresponding to the second guide hole (12),

the annular aligning space (31) is formed between the first guide hole (11) and the first guided portion (21), the shuttle member (41) is inserted into the aligning space (31).

3. (Original) The aligning drive mechanism as set forth in claim 2, wherein the annular aligning space (32) is formed between the second guide hole (12) and the second guided portion (22), and the shuttle member (42) is inserted into the aligning space (32).

4. (Currently Amended) The aligning drive mechanism as set forth in claim 1, wherein

a straight surface (45, 46) of the shuttle member (41, 42) is movably supported on the guide hole (10), and a tapered surface (47, 48) of the shuttle member (41, 42) is ~~adapted~~ configured to make a tapering engagement with the guided portion (21, 22).

5. (Currently Amended) The aligning drive mechanism as set forth in claim 1, wherein

a straight surface (45, 46) of the shuttle member (41, 42) is movably supported on the guided portion (21, 22), and a tapered surface (47, 48) of the shuttle member (41, 42) is ~~adapted~~ configured to make a tapering engagement with the guide hole (10).

6. (Currently Amended) The aligning drive mechanism as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the output member (13) is ~~adapted~~ configured to be movable with load toward a base end, the annular aligning space (31, 32) is formed in such a manner as the

tapering engagement to be tightened during the movement with load toward the base end.

7. (Currently Amended) The aligning drive mechanism as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the output member (13) is ~~adapted~~ configured to be movable with load toward a base end, the annular aligning space (31, 32) is formed in such a manner as the tapering engagement to be loosened during the movement with load toward the base end.

8. (Currently Amended) The aligning drive mechanism as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the output member (13) is ~~adapted~~ configured to be movable with load toward a leading end, the annular aligning space (31, 32) is formed in such a manner as the tapering engagement to be tightened during the movement with load toward the leading end.

9. (Currently Amended) The aligning drive mechanism as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the output member (13) is ~~adapted~~ configured to be movable with load toward a leading end, the annular aligning space (31, 32) is formed in such a manner as the tapering engagement to be loosened during the movement with load toward the leading end.

10. (Currently Amended) A positioning apparatus having the aligning drive mechanism set forth in claim 6 or 7, ~~wherein~~ and further comprising:

a reference block (1) as a fixed side is provided with the housing (6), an annular plug (9), which is to be inserted into a positioning hole (3) of a movable block (2), is projected from the housing (6) toward a leading end,

an output portion (16) of the output member (13) is inserted into the annular plug (9), a wedge surface (55) is provided on a periphery of the output portion (16) in such a manner that the wedge surface (55) gets closer to the axis toward the base end,

a plurality of pressing members (56) are supported on a peripheral wall (9a) of the annular plug (9) circumferentially at intervals and radially movably, the wedge surface (55) is ~~adapted~~ configured to make a wedge engagement with the pressing members (56), the pressing members (56) are ~~adapted~~ configured to be restorable radially inward by a returning means (58).

11. (Original) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 10, wherein the annular plug (9) having a ceiling wall (9b) is fixed to the housing (6).

12. (Original) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 10, wherein the annular plug (9) having a ceiling wall (9b) is supported on the housing (6) axially movably within a predetermined range, and the annular plug (9) is pressed toward the leading end by an advancing means (72).

13. (Currently Amended) A positioning apparatus having the aligning drive mechanism set forth in claim 6 or 7, ~~wherein~~ and further comprising:

a reference block (1) as a fixed side is provided with the housing (6), an annular collet (90), which is to be inserted into a positioning hole (3) of a movable block (2), is supported on the housing (6) axially movably within a predetermined range, the annular collet (90) is pressed toward a leading end by an advancing means (72),

an output portion (16) of the output member (13) is inserted into the annular collet (90), a wedge surface (55) is provided on a periphery of the output portion (16) in such a manner that the wedge surface (55) gets closer to the axis toward the base end,

a pressing portion (92), which engages with the positioning hole (3), is provided on a peripheral surface of the annular collet (90).

14. (Currently Amended) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 13, wherein

the annular collet (90) is integrally formed with at least one slit (91), and ~~adapted~~ configured to be contractible by either one of ~~its own~~ an inherent elastic restoring force or a returning means (94).

15. (Currently Amended) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 13, wherein

the annular collet (90) is composed of a plurality of divided members (96) arranged circumferentially, and ~~adapted~~ configured to be contractible by a returning means (94).

16. (Original) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 10, wherein the wedge surface (55) is formed with a tapered outer peripheral surface.

17. (Original) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 10, wherein a plurality of the wedge surfaces (55) are arranged circumferentially at intervals.

18. (Original) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 17, wherein
a plurality of inclined grooves (75) are provided on the output portion (16) of
the output member (13) circumferentially at intervals, and the wedge surface (55) is
formed on a bottom wall (75a) of the inclined groove (75).

19. (Original) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 18, wherein
the returning means (58) is formed with a fitting structure between a
peripheral wall of the inclined groove (75) and the pressing member (56).

20. (Currently Amended) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 11,
wherein

a supply port (62) for a cleaning fluid is provided in the housing (6), a
discharge port (64) for the cleaning fluid is formed with a fitting gap between the
peripheral wall (9a) of the annular plug (9) and the pressing member (56), and the
discharge port (64) is ~~adapted~~ configured to communicate with the supply port (62).

21. (Currently Amended) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 12,
wherein

a supply port (62) for a cleaning fluid is provided in the housing (6), a
discharge port (64) for the cleaning fluid is formed with a fitting gap between the
peripheral wall (9a) of the annular plug (9) and the pressing member (56), and the
discharge port (64) is ~~adapted~~ configured to communicate with the supply port (62).

22. (Currently Amended) The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 13,
wherein

a supply port (62) for a cleaning fluid is provided in the housing (6), a
discharge port (64) for the cleaning fluid is formed in the peripheral wall of the
annular collet (90), and the discharge port (64) is ~~adapted~~ configured to communicate
with the supply port (62).